Implementing languages entitlement in primary schools

An evaluation of progress in ten Pathfinder LEAs

Age group	Published	Reference no.
Primary	July 2005	HMI 2476

Contents

Executive summary

In September 2003 the government funded 19 Pathfinders (partnerships between local education authorities, schools and other key partners) to develop ways of teaching languages in primary schools (PMFL), as part of its strategy for introducing them into primary schools by 2010. Ofsted inspected 10 of the Pathfinders in 2004. This report presents the findings, with examples of best practice. An annex includes suggested tools for self-evaluation by local education authorities (LEA), primary and secondary schools.

The Pathfinder initiative has resulted in a significant expansion in modern languages in primary schools; few special schools, however, were included in the projects.

In almost all of the primary schools visited, modern languages provision was at least satisfactory and often better. The quality was related directly to the leadership and management of the Pathfinder LEA. The most effective Pathfinders included the initiative in the LEA's development plan and ensured effective communication with all partners.

Pathfinder training covered language skills as well as pedagogy. However, it was seldom based on effective auditing of teachers' knowledge and skills. It paid little attention to enabling teachers to evaluate their own progress or training them to monitor and evaluate the subject in school. Key elements of the training were the modelling of good practice and the coaching of primary teachers, but the potential of these approaches was not fully realised.

Leadership of the subject was at least satisfactory in almost all the primary schools and good or better in most. School managers had adopted a curriculum model which suited their situation and had identified the staff to teach the subject. In schools where coordinators had been appointed, they often carried out the audit, planning and review processes very effectively.

Pupils' achievement was at least satisfactory in all the schools visited, and very good or excellent in about half. Their attitudes were very positive. Most were confident speakers and their listening skills were very good. Many pupils showed good cultural understanding, but fewer had a sense of how different languages work. Reading and writing skills were underdeveloped.

The quality of teaching was almost always at least satisfactory and usually better, although assessment for learning was underdeveloped. Teachers' linguistic competence was at least adequate, although many needed further training to teach at a higher level. Individual lessons were planned well, but relatively few teachers had a clear sense of longer-term learning outcomes. The teaching of reading and writing was rare. Few lessons gave pupils opportunities to work independently of the teacher or with information and communication technology (ICT). Only a minority of schools celebrated language diversity well.

Few Pathfinders communicated adequately to secondary schools the potential implications of PMFL for them. Few secondary schools, including those involved in primary outreach work, used information from Key Stage 2 to plan for Year 7 and beyond.

The report suggests that LEAs and training providers should ensure that leaders, managers, governors, parents and other key stakeholders in primary, special and secondary schools understand clearly the aims, purpose and the implementation plan for developing primary languages at Key Stage 2, leading up to 2010 by when all primary schools should have introduced PMFL.

Key findings

☐ The initiative has resulted in significant expansion of PMFL provision in the Pathfinders inspected during 2004. Around 43% of all the primary schools offered PMFL provision at Key Stage 2.

☐ Strong, clear leadership and management and good communication underpinned the successful initiatives. Developing PMFL was included in the LEA's planning and review cycles, and within the primary strategy. Schools were encouraged to include PMFL in their school improvement planning. The most effective Pathfinders planned carefully to include all pupil groups and a range of schools, but only a minority included special schools.

☐ Teachers' linguistic competence was usually at least adequate for the early years of teaching PMFL, but many needed further training. Training rarely audited teachers' knowledge and skills effectively or encouraged them to evaluate their own progress. Coaching by experts and modelling good practice were key training elements, but their potential was not realised fully.

☐ Almost all the provision in primary schools was at least satisfactory and two thirds of it was good or better. The quality was linked to the overall leadership and management of the Pathfinder and the level of support provided for primary headteachers.

☐ Leadership and management of PMFL were at least satisfactory in almost all the primary schools and good or better in seven in ten. Where coordinators had been appointed, they often managed audit, planning and review processes very effectively, although headteachers and coordinators usually lacked training on monitoring progress in their schools.

☐ The quality of teaching was almost always at least satisfactory, and good or better in seven in ten schools. Explicit teaching of reading and writing was rare. ICT supported pupil's progress well, but only a minority of pupils had access to it for language learning.

☐ The majority of lessons lacked formal assessment, including structured opportunities for formative feedback. Some schools were developing pupils' self-assessment well, but this was at an early stage.

☐ Individual lessons were usually planned well, but many schools had yet to develop a coherent scheme of work for the whole of Key Stage 2, although some good work was often underway within year groups. Schools with mixed-age classes had particular difficulties in ensuring progression and continuity.

☐ Pupils' achievement was at least satisfactory, and very good or excellent in half of the schools visited. Listening skills were very well developed and most pupils were confident speakers; reading and writing were generally underdeveloped. Many pupils had good cultural understanding and appreciated why language learning was important, but fewer had a sense

of how different languages worked. They generally had very positive attitudes towards language learning.

❒   A minority of schools celebrated language diversity well, clearly benefiting bilingual and monolingual learners. Very few schools, however, had considered how to build effectively on bilingual pupils' language experience.

❒   Tracking pupils' progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 was generally at a very early stage. Few secondary schools used information from Key Stage 2 to plan for Year 7 and beyond. Few LEAs had communicated adequately to secondary schools the potential implications of PMFL for them.

❒   In many schools, uncertainty about funding and support was holding up developments in PMFL.

Recommendations

LEAs should:
- include planning for PMFL expansion in their education development plan (EDP), indicating clearly how it relates to the primary national strategy and the work of strategy managers
- plan at LEA, school and cluster level to sustain PMFL, based on:
  - review and evaluation of existing primary and secondary provision
  - analysis of pupils' language backgrounds
  - schools' identification of teachers' training needs
  - progress of PMFL teaching and learning across the LEA
- ensure that roles and responsibilities within the PMFL training team are clear and that schools are fully aware of the support and resources
- help schools to agree on shared schemes of work, with systems for assessing and accrediting pupils' performance.

Primary schools should:
- ensure that the school improvement plan includes planning for PMFL, with:
  - review and evaluation of existing provision
  - clear audit and identification of training needs for teachers and support staff
  - clearly identified strategies for sustaining PMFL
  - procedures for monitoring the quality of PMFL teaching and learning
- develop schemes of work which take account of the MFL Key Stage 2 Framework and include systems for assessing and accrediting pupils' performance
- use bilingual pupils' knowledge and experience effectively to support their own and other pupils' language learning.

Secondary schools should:
- ensure that school improvement and MFL departmental planning takes account of PMFL expansion, with clear strategies for identifying pupils' linguistic backgrounds and building on them in Year 7 and beyond
- allocate specific responsibility for primary liaison within the MFL team and ensure that all teachers are informed of developments in PMFL.

LEAs, primary and secondary schools should work together to:
- communicate effectively to staff, governors, parents, and the wider community the planned development of PMFL in the years leading up to 2010
- ensure that teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 build effectively on pupils' learning in Key Stage 2.

The work of LEA Pathfinders

1.   In December 2002 the government launched the National Languages Strategy, *Languages for All: Languages for Life*, to introduce language learning into all primary schools by 2010. [1] All pupils throughout Key Stage 2 will have the opportunity to learn a language, or languages, and to develop their cultural knowledge and understanding.

2.   To develop expertise in primary language teaching, all LEAs were invited to bid for Pathfinder status. The two-year funding enabled partnerships of schools and LEAs to pilot new ways of delivering language learning and teaching in primary schools. Work began in September 2003 in nineteen Pathfinder LEAs and one Associate Pathfinder, based on a multilingual language college.

LEA leadership and management

3.   In all the Pathfinder LEAs visited, the initiative had led to an expansion of primary provision. At the time of the inspections, an average of 43% of primary schools offered PMFL at Key Stage 2. This increased to 100% in one LEA which had already partially established PMFL. Virtually all LEAs had identified further schools to take part and provision was expanding.

4.   Including the Pathfinder in the LEA's overall planning, monitoring and review processes was crucial to success. Clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of those leading the initiative together with transparent systems for management and accountability were also key elements. The practice of the successful LEAs provided an effective model for their primary schools.

5.   Each Pathfinder tailored its initiative to reflect its own established provision. The most successful initiatives were characterised by the strong leadership and management of five key areas:
   *   the content and structure of PMFL provision
   *   appropriate resource provision
   *   pedagogic training
   *   linguistic training
   *   dialogue between primary and secondary schools.

   At a relatively early stage of developing PMFL, it was rare, however, to find that all five of these were secure in any one LEA.

Extending and enhancing PMFL provision

6.   The challenges for the Pathfinders were to:
   *   broaden curricular opportunities in terms of the language(s) offered

---

[1] *Languages for all: languages for life- a strategy for England*, DfES, 2002.

- provide cohesion with the wider primary curriculum, especially literacy
- find ways of involving and then training Key Stage 2 teachers to teach PMFL.

LEAs recognised that PMFL would be sustainable and endorsed widely as an essential part of the primary curriculum only if these challenges could be met.

7. The majority of Pathfinder LEAs took existing PMFL provision as a starting point. They audited current models and extended provision across classes, year groups and schools. In most cases, existing provision meant that pupils learnt one language, usually French, for a set period a week in Year 6, or Years 5 and 6. The lessons were often taught by a visiting external specialist – usually from a secondary school or from a commercial agency – or by the school's own specialist, swapping classes with another teacher each week. The former provided few opportunities to link MFL to the wider curriculum. The latter offered greater opportunities to tailor the curriculum to the school or even to the individual class, but had the disadvantage that the teacher, in most cases, did not teach the language to her own class.

8. Models of provision varied between Pathfinders, but most introduced German and Spanish, at least in a minority of primary schools. This was sometimes because of intervention by secondary schools, where Key Stage 3 provision was diversified, the result of relevant expertise or simply enthusiasm from a teacher or headteacher rather than a clear rationale. Sustainability was often an issue in the latter cases, with little or no planning for succession if key staff left.

9. In a small number of Pathfinders, the LEA looked for ways to provide teaching in a community language, either for groups of pupils with the language as a home or heritage language or, rarely, for whole classes with pupils speaking this, or other, languages alongside English. Again, continuity was a potential issue where only relatively small numbers of qualified teachers of the languages were available.

10. The great majority of courses followed the QCA schemes of work for Key Stage 2 French, German or Spanish. In the best practice, LEA MFL and primary advisers guided primary schools in adapting the schemes to suit their circumstances. Planning for clearly identified learning outcomes, in short units of work and over the longer term, challenged many schools. In mixed-age classes, for example in small rural schools, there were specific concerns about progression: one LEA set up training and support to tackle this.

11. A commitment to inclusion underpinned the work of most LEA Pathfinders. Recognising that a pupil's teacher was probably best placed to be able to meet his or her learning needs in a new subject was one of the key factors

influencing the move to train class teachers to teach PMFL in the longer term.

12. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and lower attaining pupils achieved best when a teacher with good knowledge of their learning needs took part in the initiative. In some schools this was a learning support teacher or assistant.

13. The involvement of special schools in the Pathfinder initiative was rare, although two LEAs focused on special schools specifically where they already taught MFL successfully in their secondary curriculum. LEA involvement in PMFL in special schools provided firm evidence of how language learning can support pupils' social, cultural and linguistic progress.

14. Providing an appropriate curriculum for specific groups of pupils, for example higher-attaining pupils, boys and girls – featured strongly in the planning of most LEAs. The majority of Pathfinders paid less attention to meeting the needs, and successfully exploiting the linguistic knowledge and experience, of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).

15. Primary schools which planned for PMFL at whole-school level, often including it in improvement and development plans, found creative ways of linking language learning to other areas of the curriculum. This contributed strongly to pupils' progress. The most successful LEAs involved their primary strategy manager in such developments to ensure coherence across curriculum planning. Leadership from the LEA Pathfinder helped schools to identify how this might best be achieved through:
   - providing cross-curricular opportunities
   - linking languages to other subjects
   - taking every opportunity to reinforce PMFL, for example during registration and other daily routines
   - inviting visitors
   - planning visits
   - using ICT to provide virtual encounters and visits.

16. One LEA with established PMFL emphasised the significant contribution which languages could make to pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. Many teachers planned specific experiences into their lessons to reinforce learning from these key curriculum areas.

Case study

An innovative approach in one LEA to the Key Stage 2 curriculum supported teachers in teaching a multilingual programme, which built on pupils' work in literacy and developed their early understanding of language. Investigative activities enabled pupils to make links between languages and draw conclusions about how languages work. This

provided a strong foundation for later, or simultaneous, learning of one or two specific languages, and pupils made rapid progress. The approach also provided an inclusive, non-hierarchical view of language and culture early on.

PMFL training

Leading and managing training

17. Training providers included LEA MFL and primary specialists, secondary MFL teachers and higher education staff. Venues included LEA professional development centres, Comenius centres, universities, schools and colleges.[2] Selecting appropriate local venues for courses proved challenging, particularly in large rural LEAs, where teachers had to travel long distances for training.

18. Pathfinder funding was also used to enable teachers and trainers to attend national and international training courses and conferences. Where Pathfinder resources were not available, LEAs had a key role in advising schools on how to access funding for such courses.

19. In many courses, enhancing teachers' language skills was combined with training in how to teach the language. In the best training, trainers demonstrated good MFL classroom practice very effectively and showed participants how to reflect on good teaching and learning. A key issue for the Pathfinders was assuring the quality of the training. Some LEAs neglected the importance of 'training the trainers', failing to acknowledge that successful teachers need specific training for working with other adults.

20. The most effective training was found in schools where there was a clear rationale for introducing PMFL and where the introduction had been well led by the LEA and the school's senior managers.

Pedagogic training

21. Pathfinder LEAs provided specific training in PMFL pedagogy for many generalist primary teachers, as well as for teaching assistants, some of whom were training to teach their mother tongue as a foreign language.

22. Most Pathfinder LEAs organised pedagogic support in the primary teachers' own classrooms. The most effective Pathfinders recognised the importance of 'training the trainers' and trained secondary MFL teachers to support primary colleagues so that they had a clear understanding of their role in providing both pedagogic and linguistic support. They met regularly

---

[2] The Comenius network supports the implementation of the National Languages Strategy by facilitating links between all language-learning stakeholders and providing advice and continuing professional development for teachers. The nine Comenius regional networks can be accessed through: www.cilt.org.uk/comenius)

to update their skills and provided periodic reports on the progress of their trainees.

23. Some Pathfinders used a 'cascade' training model: a primary PMFL coordinator attended central LEA training and then trained her own colleagues. This training model worked well when LEAs communicated clear expectations for primary continuing professional development (CPD) to headteachers. One LEA applied the model particularly effectively to the training of teachers in teaching multilingual activities and language investigation. Appropriate ICT training also featured strongly in this work.

Linguistic training

24. A key role for the Pathfinder LEAs was to develop the linguistic competence and confidence of primary teachers and teaching assistants. Effective audit, planning and review underpinned the success of this training, as well as a clear rationale for gradually introducing specific languages and the careful selection of language trainers. Teachers made less progress in developing their language knowledge and skills when the training arrangements were more ad hoc.

25. Many Pathfinder LEAs provided language enhancement training through locally-based courses, often run by secondary MFL specialists or foreign language assistants. Again, 'training the trainers' was a key factor in their success, as was enabling primary staff to evaluate their own progress. Both these elements of successful training were neglected in some Pathfinders.

26. Some training schemes were linked to higher education validation, but did not always recognise the professional and personal demands on primary teachers. For accreditation to be successful, a variety of ways of accrediting learning is necessary.

27. Pathfinders also acted as conduits for national and international training courses. Many teachers gained significantly from such intensive training opportunities, particularly in developing their oral and aural confidence. Some LEA Pathfinders also provided:
    - advice on setting up international projects
    - advice on self-study language courses
    - commercial materials for loan to school-based colleagues
    - audio materials to enable teachers and support staff to 'listen and repeat' common classroom instructions in the target language.

28. External MFL specialists worked alongside primary teachers in their classrooms, demonstrating good use of the target language in teaching and then gradually adopting a coaching role. The best trainers used review sessions to provide specific feedback on linguistic development, including identifying pronunciation and intonation difficulties and dealing

with grammatical errors. Teachers benefited considerably when time was allocated for them to review their own and their pupils' learning with the trainer, but Pathfinders often neglected this vital element.

Developing effective PMFL teachers

29. Where primary teachers were becoming effective PMFL teachers, the following were in place:
    - audit of prior language teaching experience
    - identification of training needs (e.g. ICT)
    - opportunities to observe expert MFL teachers teaching on training courses, in other classrooms and schools. and with the teacher's own class
    - clear schemes of work (short, medium and long term)
    - training to teach language awareness and investigation
    - training to assess pupils' progress
    - appropriate resources, including access to hardware and software
    - progressively increased participation in lessons
    - regular opportunities to discuss pupils' needs and progress
    - opportunities before and after sessions for joint planning and review
    - regular monitoring and formative feedback to teachers on their own pedagogical and linguistic progress
    - structured opportunities to reflect upon achievement and plan future steps.

30. Priorities for future training should include:
    - monitoring the effectiveness of training and its impact on teachers' skills and pupils' progress
    - training PMFL coordinators and primary headteachers to monitor language teaching and learning in their schools
    - training which specifically addresses the Key Stage 2 MFL framework.

Managing resources

31. Pathfinder LEAs helped schools to manage resources by:
    - involving appropriate staff in training
    - providing guidance on how best to involve speakers of other languages in lessons and extra-curricular activities
    - providing schools with links abroad, both real and virtual, where pupils had access to peers and adults in schools and other contexts
    - using Pathfinder funding to recruit additional foreign language assistants (FLAs) to work with pupils and teachers.

32. LEA staff also provided advice and support on schemes of work. These were often based on the QCA schemes and, in the best practice, were adapted to suit a local context: for example, inserting language activities involving locally spoken languages or making links to specific areas where twinning arrangements existed.

33. Pathfinder funding was often used to bring together groups of primary teachers to work on these schemes, sharing best practice and developing effective resources to support the various units of work. Pathfinder groups also discovered that familiar primary resources, such as mini-whiteboards, puppets and games equipment, often served PMFL well. These reflected the activities and resources which pupils encountered in literacy, mathematics and ICT lessons and helped them to make curricular links.

34. Some Pathfinders purchased commercial resources for all schools. Evaluation of these was at an early stage in most LEAs and primary teachers had not always been involved sufficiently.

35. Pathfinder LEAs also used ICT to produce some high quality resources for delivering PMFL. These included paper-based materials, such as flashcards and mini-cards for language games, as well as electronic resources such as CD ROMs. Some LEAs helped schools to develop pupils' use of ICT for language learning through:
   - the use of internet materials for investigating language, often via links to local grids for learning
   - video-conferencing to give pupils a wider range of real audiences for their presentations
   - the active use of presentation software and video to support the development of skills.

36. In one Pathfinder LEA, primary schools developed pupils' generic ICT skills, using PMFL as a stimulating and innovative vehicle. Where this work was most successful, LEA ICT and MFL specialists worked together, time and funding implications were well thought out and primary teachers' evaluation of resources was built into the planning. Not all Pathfinders achieved this synergy, however, and rapid change in new technologies often affected developments adversely.

Leadership and management of PMFL in primary schools

37. The quality of leadership and management of PMFL was at least satisfactory in almost all of the schools visited and good or better in two thirds. The quality was linked directly to the LEA Pathfinder's overall quality of leadership and management and the level of support provided for primary headteachers.

38. Where leadership and management were very good, the headteacher, staff and governors shared a strong commitment to the subject, which often extended to parents and the wider community. The schools had a clear rationale for introducing PMFL, based on a vision of how the subject would be taught and how pupils would benefit. The most effective schools

had planned the introduction of PMFL carefully. Some phased in the introduction by:

- auditing the skills of staff
- identifying and meeting training needs
- planning the content in a well conceived scheme of work to ensure continuity and progression, with clear aims and objectives for each year group in Key Stage 2
- planning appropriately for specific curricular challenges, such as mixed-age classes
- making good use of a range of support
- providing suitable resources, including ICT
- mapping links with other subjects.

A languages coordinator led developments in many of the schools and worked with the headteacher to monitor implementation, particularly the improvements in teaching and learning.

39. The best managed schools ensured that the learning needs of all groups of pupils were met effectively. Community languages spoken in the school contributed fully to the development of the subject, for example through extra-curricular classes, where numbers were viable.

40. Where subject leadership was very good, arrangements for assessing pupils' progress were highly effective. These included formative assessment and self-assessment to motivate pupils. Communications with the local secondary schools were efficient and summative information was transferred to support progression in language learning at Key Stage 3.

41. In many schools, schemes of work were at a very early stage of development. Whilst some good work was often underway in different year groups, schools had yet to develop a coherent scheme for the whole key stage. Schools with mixed-age classes had particular difficulties in ensuring progression and continuity in the early stages of implementing PMFL.

42. Particular weaknesses in leadership and management were the failure to monitor and evaluate the quality of PMFL teaching and learning, and the lack of formal assessment of pupils' progress. A small number of schools showed a lack of confidence in and commitment to PMFL when they suspended its teaching in Year 6 so that pupils could concentrate on preparing for the national tests.

43. In many schools, regardless of the effectiveness of leadership, uncertainty about funding and support impeded developments. A common symptom of this was reluctance to appoint a PMFL coordinator. In some schools, the headteacher acted as languages coordinator, a position which was unsustainable in the longer term. Continuity in teaching was an issue for schools which were unable to make alternative arrangements, for example
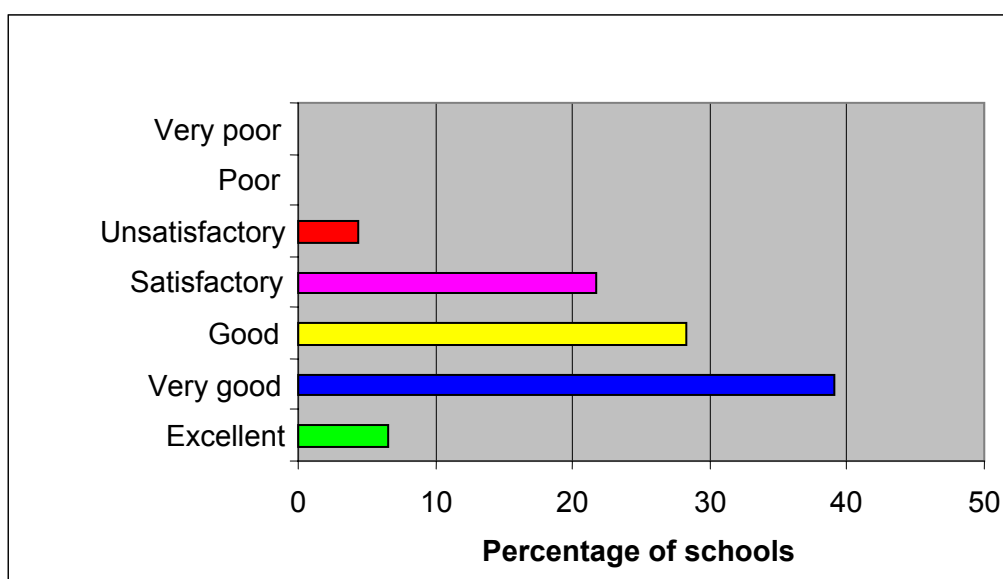
in case of a teacher's prolonged illness, when they had chosen a language other than French.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching

44. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all the primary schools visited and mostly good or better (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Quality of teaching in the primary schools visited

45. Some lessons were taught by the pupils' class teacher or regular PMFL teacher employed by the school (including teaching assistants, in a few instances); some were taught by external 'expert' visiting teachers; and some were taught by an external teacher training the pupils' own teacher. Where joint planning and review were features of the third teaching model, it usually produced very good or excellent teaching and learning.

46. The teaching of listening and speaking was generally good and led to significant gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the foreign language. Explicit teaching of reading and writing was less usual, although a small minority of teachers applied English literacy techniques effectively to the foreign language, skilfully eliciting pupils' understanding of the links between sounds and spelling in the foreign language. This tended to occur where secondary teachers worked with primary teachers and where a real dialogue had been established. In some very good lessons, pupils were working at text level and developing strong skills in these areas.

47. Generalist primary teachers were often more confident about teaching language investigation, looking at a range of languages but with English as the medium of communication in the lesson, than teaching in a foreign

language. This work built logically on existing elements of literacy teaching with which they were already familiar. The contributions of bilingual pupils, and, where possible, bilingual assistants, also brought language to life and generated significant excitement.

48. In one LEA there was also some very good teaching of knowledge about language and language-learning strategies. In this Year 5 lesson, pupils learnt how to deduce meaning from texts and made comparisons between languages. In their previous lesson they had worked in French, German and Dutch. In this one, they worked also in Spanish.

   Case study

   The teacher asks the pupils to deduce the language of Harry Potter texts in French, German and Spanish without the help of the English version. Pupils are very attentive and work very hard to identify the right languages. The teacher questions them very effectively to explore the reasons why they selected particular languages. Pupils deduce which book the text is from, using cognates, and say how they have done it. The notion of 'clues' as a language-learning strategy is rehearsed and reinforced so that pupils can use it routinely.

   Pupils then listen to extracts of Harry Potter in the three languages on a tape and have to match the sounds they hear to text and deduce the language. They listen very hard and a forest of hands shoots up. The activity captures pupils' interest very well, harnessing their own knowledge about Harry Potter in English as a reference point. Pupils are fascinated with the sounds of the different languages.

   The teacher shows pupils three different language versions of the hardback book, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. They are in awe at the notion that the books are translated into over 50 languages across the world. The next task is to look at the book covers and deduce the language and the title in English. Pupils try very hard and are successful. They pass the books around, handling them with respect; the teacher conducts spot checks, 'Who has the Spanish version? - very good strategies for harnessing and retaining pupils' interest.

   She asks pupils to help her put the words of each language title under the language heading. Their task is, in pairs at their tables, to get similar words into the right language and order, based how they put the English title together. They are consistently on task, working at their own pace with the materials and extension tasks. An appropriately challenging deadline is given. The teacher takes the words, all mixed up as in a pack of cards, and one by one says the word in the target language and the pupils help her to put it under the correct language heading and in the correct order so that they can check their own attempts. Pupils enjoy getting their tongues around some of the words.

49. Almost all teachers' own linguistic competence was good enough for the early years of language-learning. However, they sometimes lacked sufficient understanding of how to sustain their own or pupils' use of the foreign language, leading to some lack of challenge for pupils. Most teachers knew how to maximise or adapt their own linguistic knowledge in order to use the foreign language effectively, but some teachers used too much unnecessary English.

50. In the best lessons, pupils worked not only as a whole class, but also had opportunities to work individually and in pairs and groups. Lessons which tended towards predominantly whole-class, teacher-led work sometimes missed opportunities to challenge all pupils appropriately. Nevertheless, lessons were mostly very successful in interesting and motivating them.

51. Although individual lessons were carefully planned, teachers did not always make learning objectives sufficiently explicit to the pupils and return to evaluate progress at the end. Schools in the early stages of PMFL implementation had not always identified the detail of longer-term learning outcomes for a particular class or year group.

52. Teachers used appropriate resources, often adapting generic primary materials including puppets, mini-whiteboards and big books. Songs were frequently used and teachers used commercially produced collections of music, as well as materials gathered on trips abroad.

53. ICT featured in only a small minority of the schools, but it was used well in some classrooms, especially for investigating sentence patterns or comparing languages, where pupils had access to a bank of networked computers. A small minority of teachers used interactive whiteboards effectively, usually to explore language patterns, and there was some early work in video-conferencing to develop pupils' confidence in listening and speaking.

54. Video was used very effectively in some classes: short clips enabled pupils to see children of their own age using the foreign language, often in a school setting. This also provided good models of speaking for pupils whose teacher's competence in the foreign language was at a relatively early stage. In general, the judicious use of tapes, CDs, CD ROMs, and videos – alongside the effective deployment of native speakers – provided authentic models of language for pupils and resulted in high levels of accuracy in pronunciation and intonation.

55. Where a cross-curricular approach was taken, teachers used the foreign language(s) in an integrated and purposeful way, enhancing pupils' learning across the curriculum:
   - literacy links helped pupils to deepen their understanding of their own language

- mental calculation in mathematics was given a new slant through using a foreign language
- PE, dance and music were taught in the foreign language.

56. In the best lessons, all adults in the classroom were engaged fully, leading to clear benefits for pupils. This involved:
    - external teachers and class teachers working together in a training partnership
    - learning support teachers and teaching assistants being properly briefed on learning objectives
    - foreign language assistants providing authentic models of speech for the pupils and contributing well to pupils' inter-cultural awareness.

Pupils' achievement and attitudes

57. Pupils' achievement was at least satisfactory in all the schools visited; in half of them it was very good or excellent. They had very positive attitudes towards language learning and looked forward to continuing to learn languages.

58. In the great majority of lessons, both boys and girls were keenly involved in all activities. Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes, and lower-attaining pupils, made good progress. They participated confidently and with manifest enthusiasm for a new language: their teachers often spoke of this being like a 'fresh start'.

59. Pupils in the two special schools visited made very good progress in the early stages of learning Spanish, particularly in developing their listening and speaking skills. They were very enthusiastic about learning a foreign language.

60. Bilingual and multilingual pupils usually made particularly good progress and were able to take a leading role in lessons where their home or heritage language was being used. Higher attaining pupils responded especially well to tasks where they could adapt language in a creative way or where they could investigate language patterns, although they were not always challenged fully enough.

61. Pupils' listening skills were very well developed and they responded enthusiastically. The great majority of pupils spoke with confidence and some were able to speak extensively. Pupils' pronunciation and intonation were highly accurate in many classes. Some schools reported that learning languages was beginning to reinforce pupils' generic oracy and literacy, for example through making links between sounds and spellings. Relatively few pupils read systematically; the use of dictionaries, reference or word lists was also quite rare. Pupils could write accurately when given the opportunity, but the majority of schools did not emphasise writing skills.

62.   In a minority of schools pupils were developing good inter-cultural awareness, an understanding of how language works and how different languages are interrelated. They showed very good analytical skills and were developing a good foundation for future language learning.

63.   In a greater number of schools pupils were developing a good understanding of how best to learn a foreign language. They often talked about the advantages of understanding and speaking languages. Some were already able to articulate the advantages in adult life, in terms of both personal and professional development. Some were able to give examples of recent contact with children in other countries or increased understanding of the heritage language and culture of friends in their own school. A strong feature of some pupils' enthusiasm for PMFL was the obvious pride they took in 'teaching' the language to younger siblings or even parents. A minority of older pupils knew what they were doing well and what they needed to do to make even more progress in languages.

Assessment

64.   At the time of the inspections, most schools had yet to develop procedures for assessing and reporting on pupils' progress. They did not give pupils a clear idea of how well they were doing in different areas of language learning and how they might improve. Teachers gave pupils positive oral feedback during lessons, but fear that they would undermine pupils' confidence deterred many of them from assessing them formally at this early stage. Schools recognised, however, that as provision was extended, more formal assessment procedures would be needed to support progression over the four years of Key Stage 2.

65.   In some schools, however, pupils were encouraged to take early responsibility for their own learning and assess their progress in different skills. Self-assessment tools included:
      *   adaptations of the European Languages Portfolio[3]
      *   'can do' sheets linked to the scheme of work or course book
      *   pupil-friendly versions of the National Curriculum level descriptions.

      Consistent and regular use of self-assessment in a positive context worked well and gave pupils a real sense of achievement.

---

[3] The European Languages Portfolio (ELP) was designed to enable learners to record all their language learning achievements. The recognised ELP in England is the Junior Portfolio, validated by the Council of Europe and produced by CILT, the National Centre for Languages.

The primary-secondary dialogue

Continuity and progression

66. In the great majority of Pathfinder LEAs, primary-secondary patterns of transfer were complex and pupils could not necessarily continue immediately in Year 7 with a language studied in Year 6. Most secondary schools took pupils from a wide range of primary schools, and were unable to adjust the languages on offer to provide continuity in a specific language. LEAs did not always communicate this important message to primary schools and parents and an unrealistic expectation often arose of immediate continuity.

67. In some LEAs, relationships between primary and secondary schools were not conducive to discussion and joint planning. Primary teachers and headteachers were concerned that secondary schools would not acknowledge their pupils' prior language learning, and that some pupils would have to start the same language again from scratch in Year 7.

68. Not all LEAs gave secondary schools sufficient information about PMFL developments. Consequently, senior managers in these schools had little awareness of how PMFL might have an impact on their own curriculum. Even in the schools where MFL staff were involved in outreach work in local primary schools, there was often little awareness of the need to change practice in Key Stage 3, and particularly in Year 7.

69. In LEAs where PMFL was well established, the Pathfinder initiative increased dialogue between primary and secondary schools. In Pathfinder LEAs with little or no previous PMFL provision, the majority were requiring secondary schools to take account of PMFL in their Year 7 MFL curriculum from September 2005.

70. Details of which language(s) pupils had studied and what skills and knowledge they had gained in Key Stage 2 were not always successfully transferred to secondary schools. Since the Pathfinder initiative focused on Key Stage 2, the majority of LEAs devoted most of their energies to primary schools. There was little advice to MFL departments in secondary schools about teaching in Year 7 where some or all pupils had previous experience of MFL. However, the most effective Pathfinders found ways of informing and consulting secondary schools.

71. At the time of the inspections, the majority of Pathfinders were beginning to develop transfer documentation to enable secondary schools to build more effectively on pupils' prior learning. Several were using their own adapted versions of the Junior Portfolio, although secondary schools were not always aware of how they might best use it to support successful

transition and progression. A small number of Pathfinders were piloting the Languages Ladder.[4]

72. Some secondary teachers used pupils' PMFL portfolios well to boost pupils' confidence in Year 7. Pupils appreciated the acknowledgement of their prior experience and it motivated them in their new class. One LEA Pathfinder set up an awards scheme which benefited both primary pupils and those in Year 9. These awards were felt to provide motivation at points of transfer at key stages and had the additional advantage in secondary schools of raising awareness of PMFL developments in primary schools.

73. Some secondary schools had developed innovative approaches to issues of transition and continuity. In one LEA, secondary and primary teachers worked together to produce a bridging unit of work in a specific language to ease transfer. One specialist language college devised an innovative scheme of work for Year 6, based on motivating ICT activities. In other LEAs, groups of secondary and primary teachers worked together to devise schemes of work to support progression which incorporated key features of both the Key Stage 3 Framework and the draft Key Stage 2 Framework.

Changing practice at Key Stage 3

74. Despite the growing numbers of pupils who enter Key Stage 3 with prior knowledge and skills in languages, MFL departments had rarely established a policy to guide staff on teaching a group of pupils with mixed PMFL experience in the early weeks of Year 7. Even where transfer data had been sent to secondary schools, there was little evidence that MFL departments were taking account of this in early language lessons. Higher attaining Year 7 pupils who had learned the same language in their primary school often lacked challenge in their early months at secondary school. They spoke of the frustration of repeating earlier learning and 'starting again'.

75. Some secondary schools in areas where PMFL was more established were tracking pupils' progress to identify the impact of Key Stage 2 language learning. One school had analysed the examination results at the end of Year 7 and concluded that pupils with prior experience of MFL tended to do better than those who had none, irrespective of whether they had continued with the same language or had changed languages on transfer. Whilst such monitoring was at an early stage, it was nevertheless providing vital data to inform the next stages of development.

---

[4] The Languages Ladder is a voluntary recognition scheme, designed to give learners of all ages credit for their language skills. Six stages cover grades 1–17 in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Launched as part of the National Languages Strategy, the first three stages will be available from autumn 2005 in eight initial languages.

76. In a minority of secondary schools, changes were made to languages provision at Key Stage 3 in order to accommodate pupils' Key Stage 2 experience and to provide continuity of learning.

Case studies

One school, which previously offered only German in Year 7, split the year group to offer both German and French, which had been the pupils' main primary language.

In a school where significant numbers of pupils were joining with experience of Spanish, a weekly lunch-time club was set up and Spanish was to be offered to an increased number of classes from Year 8.

Several schools were embarking on early setting and then 'fast-tracking' higher attaining pupils, with a view to entering them for the GCSE examination at the end of the key stage.

A few schools were already considering a change in courses for Key Stage 4, for example a new language, a vocational course, or an AS-level.

77. Where major curriculum change was not practicable, some secondary MFL departments had adjusted their schemes of work to enable pupils to progress more quickly through topic areas which had been covered in primary schools. As a result, one department had been able to introduce a range of tenses into its Year 7 scheme of work.

78. In a minority of secondary schools, MFL departments had a good knowledge of pupils' language backgrounds, and both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 built on pupils' prior languages work.

79. In a small minority of schools, mainly specialist language colleges, PMFL transfer information was used for early setting in Year 7 MFL lessons so that pupils with similar prior experiences and achievement were taught in the same class.. One language college had worked with its main partner primary schools to develop assessment procedures based on national curriculum levels. Over 50% of its pupils had achieved level 3 by the end of Year 6.

80. The small minority of secondary schools that altered their Year 7 setting arrangements to take account of pupils' prior achievement in the same language rarely had explicit plans to evaluate these arrangements to ensure that pupils in lower sets did not lose their motivation.

81. In some LEAs, secondary schools, usually specialist language colleges, played major strategic and organisational roles in the Pathfinder. They perceived their role as focusing on the provision of primary outreach work

and training. Often, however, their own MFL provision in Key Stage 3 did not reflect the developments in primary schools and they made little attempt to adapt approaches or curriculum provision to pupils' changing language learning needs.

The role of secondary schools in PMFL

82. Some secondary schools, and all the specialist language colleges, were involved in outreach work, where MFL staff regularly visited local primary schools. A number of very good teachers were learning to be skilful trainers. They provided models for primary colleagues and had the potential to secure high quality transition between phases. These MFL teachers had a pivotal role in bringing together their own secondary experience and expertise with the best primary practice.

83. In some smaller LEAs, secondary and primary colleagues met regularly as a Pathfinder group to discuss PMFL development. In larger LEAs such meetings took place mainly locally or in clusters. These meetings were usually restricted to secondary MFL heads of department or outreach teachers and primary teachers. In areas where face-to-face meetings proved impractical at an early stage of the initiative, some secondary schools sent questionnaires or surveys to primary feeder schools to monitor the extent of PMFL provision. Secondary MFL teachers had a greater awareness of PMFL issues in LEAs where Key Stage 2 was referred to systematically at KS3 training sessions.

84. Whilst heads of secondary MFL departments usually knew at least a little about PMFL developments, this awareness rarely permeated their departments as a whole. Where one or two members of a team were involved in outreach work, their experiences were not shared systematically with the whole department. Most MFL departments had little understanding of how they might build upon pupils' experience in language learning, particularly where pupils had learnt a language other than that taught in Year 7. A number of secondary MFL departments, including those in specialist language colleges, had a low level of awareness of pupils' diverse language backgrounds. In these schools there was little encouragement for pupils to gain accreditation in their home or heritage language. A small minority of teachers were sceptical about the benefits of PMFL.

85. The majority of secondary MFL teachers, however, had a positive attitude to PMFL developments and could see benefits for their work. As particular gains from PMFL, they identified increased enthusiasm and confidence amongst Year 7 pupils, along with their improved listening skills and understanding of how language works.

86. The most effective Pathfinders:
     • kept primary and secondary colleagues informed of PMFL developments

- involved key LEA colleagues, including primary strategy managers, Key Stage 3 strategy managers, minority ethnic achievement coordinators, ICT advisers and project managers, and school link officers
- kept headteachers and governors' networks well informed, providing them with guidance on how to secure the commitment of their school communities to PMFL.

87. However, further action is needed by LEAs and secondary schools if they are to build successfully on pupils' achievements at Key Stage 2.

Priorities for training and support

88. The early evidence from the inspection of these Pathfinders indicates that LEAs and training providers should ensure that:
    - leaders, managers, governors, parents and other stakeholders in primary, special and secondary schools understand clearly the aims, purpose and implementation plan for Key Stage 2 PMFL leading up to 2010
    - primary school leaders and PMFL coordinators develop schemes of work which take account of the MFL Key Stage 2 Framework, identify outcomes for specific year groups and develop these in agreement with local secondary schools
    - secondary school leaders and MFL subject leaders work with primary colleagues to ensure that Key Stage 3 provision builds effectively on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills developed at Key Stage 2
    - trainers involved in supporting primary teachers (including advisory teachers, secondary teachers, advanced skills teachers [ASTs], and FLAs) receive training themselves on how to coach, as well as teach and demonstrate to other adults
    - primary teachers continue to have access to:
        - o linguistic training, including clear feedback on progress made
        - o training in PMFL pedagogy, including how to teach a range of skills, sound-spelling links, how language works and how to assess and record pupils' progress
        - o training in language awareness and investigation
        - o on-site support through expert modelling and coaching in how to teach PMFL, including appropriate time for joint planning and review
    - all those involved in training primary teachers, including headteachers of primary schools, are confident to monitor progress and ensure that further CPD opportunities and resources are focused appropriately.

Notes

The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the progress made by LEAs and schools as a result of the Pathfinder initiative, launched by the DfES in 2003. The 60 primary schools visited across ten Pathfinder LEAs were selected by the LEA Pathfinder manager and generally represented the best of current practice within the Pathfinder. Annex A lists the Pathfinders inspected.

In spring 2004, visits were made to two of the ten LEAs with previous experience of primary languages, where their Pathfinder status was securing the further expansion of provision and early collaborative work with secondary schools. During the summer and autumn terms 2004, a representative sample of eight further Pathfinder LEAs, and the Associate Pathfinder, were visited. Pathfinder inspections comprised a four-day visit by two specialist MFL inspectors. The Pathfinder coordinators selected schools and drew up a programme for the visits which included:
- interviews with key LEA personnel
- visits to six primary schools, including lesson observation and interviews with headteachers, teachers and pupils
- visits to two secondary schools, including interviews with key managers
- scrutiny of documentation and resources.

In some LEAs, depending on the timing of the visit, inspectors also observed training events and meetings.

The instruments developed for the inspection have been adapted to provide the self-evaluation tools included in Annex B.

Further information

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
www.dfes.gov.uk/languages

CILT – The National Centre for Languages
www.cilt.org.uk

NACELL – The National Advisory Centre on Early Language Learning
www.nacell.org.uk

Annex A

LEA Pathfinders visited

- Barking and Dagenham
- Coventry
- East Riding of Yorkshire
- Enfield
- Hampshire
- Kent
- Lancashire
- Liverpool
- North Tyneside
- Richmond-upon-Thames
- Shirelands School (Associate Pathfinder)

Annex B

Tools for self-evaluation

The instruments developed for the inspection have been adapted to provide the following self-evaluation tools for primary and secondary schools and LEAs.

Primary school self-evaluation prompts

Issue: implementing Key Stage 2 languages entitlement.

Please assess your school on the 1–4 scale, where
Grade 1: Outstanding
Grade 2: Good
Grade 3: Satisfactory
Grade 4: Inadequate

Pupils' achievement in languages

What is the quality of pupils':

	1	2	3	4
1. Listening skills?				
2. Speaking skills (e.g. confidence, accuracy of intonation and pronunciation, willingness to use whole sentences)?				
3. Reading skills (e.g. understanding of sound-spelling links, ability to use simple dictionaries or reference sources)?				
4. Writing skills (e.g. accuracy, understanding of basic conventions and grammar)?				
5. Understanding of cultural similarities/differences between England and the country of the target language?				
6. Knowledge about how to learn another language?				
7. Knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses?				
8. Attitudes to learning languages?				
9. Overall achievement: are different groups (girls, boys, SEN, EAL, gifted and talented etc) achieving as much as they could?				

Teaching, learning and assessment

What is the quality of:

	1	2	3	4
1. The teachers' own linguistic competence?				
2. Their use of the target language in lessons?				
3. Teaching about similarities and differences between languages?				
4. Learning objectives: how clear are they? Are they challenging enough?				
5. Teaching methods: do they interest and motivate pupils and enable them to make progress?				
6. Languages resources and their use?				
7. The involvement of other adults in lessons?				
8. The management of pupils' behaviour?				
9. Pupils' learning (e.g. increase in their knowledge, skills and understanding, ability to concentrate, to work independently and collaboratively)?				
10. Monitoring and recording of pupils' progress in the four skills?				
11. The use of this information to inform planning?				
12. Feedback to pupils on their progress?				
13. Monitoring of the progress of specific groups?				
14. Gathering of summative data for transfer to secondary schools?				

Leadership and management

What is the quality of:

	1	2	3	4
1. Our planning for implementing and sustaining KS2 languages entitlement?				
2. Information on languages policy for pupils, teachers, parents, governors and other key stakeholders?				
3. Pupils' access to languages: do all pupils learn a language?				
4. Our identification of different languages spoken by the school community?				
5. Our schemes of work (do they reflect local and national guidelines, e.g. the KS2 Framework)?				
6. Our linking of languages with other curriculum areas?				
7. Our monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning?				
8. Our management of CPD (e.g. linguistic and pedagogic training)?				
9. Resources, including use of ICT to support language learning?				
10. Our use of local and national support networks (e.g. CILT and Comenius centres, NACELL website)?				
11. Overall subject leadership?				
12. Senior management team support for languages?				

What has our self-evaluation revealed, and what do we need to do next?

Secondary school self-evaluation prompts

Issue: securing continuity and progression between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in MFL.

Please assess yourself on the 1–4 scale, where
Grade 1: Outstanding
Grade 2: Good
Grade 3: Satisfactory
Grade 4: Inadequate.

Questions for the senior management team

What is the quality of:

	1	2	3	4
1. Steps we have taken to find out about languages provision in our main partner primary schools?				
2. Action planning to take account of this, for example in changes to Year 7 curriculum organisation and longer term planning for Key Stage 3?				
3. The information we have provided for pupils, parents, teachers, governors and other key stakeholders, to involve them and secure their commitment to changes in school languages policy?				
4. Our support for the languages department in implementing changes?				
5. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of these changes?				

Questions for the languages department

What is the quality of:

	1	2	3	4
1. Our communication with partner primary school languages teachers/coordinators (e.g. visits to and from their schools to see classroom work and exchange information)?				
2. Our dissemination of this information within the languages department?				
3. The data we obtain on incoming Year 7 pupils' prior experience and achievement in languages?				
4. The use we make of this data?				
5. Our Year 7 schemes of work (do they take account of pupils' prior experiences?)				
6. Our organisation of Year 7 teaching groups?				
7. Our management of teaching and learning in mixed-experience Year 7 classes?				
8. Our monitoring of Year 7 pupils' attitudes and progress?				
9. Our provision for different groups (e.g. SEN, gifted and talented, boys, EAL, bilingual)?				
10. Our planning for Year 8 and beyond?				

What has our self-evaluation revealed, and what do we need to do next?

LEA self-evaluation prompts

Issue: supporting the implementation of languages entitlement in Key Stage 2 and effective transition with Key Stage 3

Please assess your LEA on the 1–4 scale, where
Grade 1: Outstanding
Grade 2: Good
Grade 3: Satisfactory
Grade 4: Inadequate.

Leadership and management

What is the quality of:

	1	2	3	4
1. Our planning for KS2 languages entitlement - does it feature in our EDP, is it linked to our Primary Strategy, have we addressed sustainability?				
2. Information about the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of LEA languages personnel: is it clear to all stakeholders?				
3. KS2 languages documentation and guidance for primary, secondary and special schools, governors and parents?				
4. Our management and monitoring of available KS2 languages funding?				
5. Our involvement with local, national and international sources of support for languages (language colleges, CILT Comenius centres, ITT, DfES MFL team, TTA, British Council etc)?				
6. Our management of LEA languages personnel?				
7. Our management of KS2 languages resources and schools' access to them?				
8. Our arrangements for supporting effective KS2/KS3 languages transition?				
9. Our overall support for languages and linguistic diversity?				
10. Current languages provision and achievement in our primary schools?				
11. Our secondary schools' responses to KS2 languages?				
12. Our quality assurance procedures and practice in all these areas?				

Training to support the implementation of KS2 languages entitlement

What is the quality of our training for:

	1	2	3	4
1. Primary headteachers?				
2. Primary languages coordinators?				
3. Primary class teachers and teaching assistants (pedagogic, linguistic, centre-based, school-based)?				
4. Primary-based trainers?				
5. Secondary-based trainers?				
6. LEA languages personnel?				
7. Other relevant LEA personnel?				

How effective are our procedures for monitoring and evaluating training quality?

What has our self-evaluation revealed, and what do we need to do next?